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Former Mattawan School bus driver sues school district

MATTAWAN - A former Mattawan school bus driver is suing the Mattawan Consolidated School District, alleging that she was wrongfully terminated after passing out holiday candy bags to students on her school bus, some of which contained religious messages.

A 12-page complaint was filed with the United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan last December. Documents allege that Mattawan Consolidated School bus driver, Sarah Robinson, was fired last April, following a few occasions where she gave out candy bags to students ahead of holidays such as Halloween and Christmas.

Robinson has said she was representing herself in the lawsuit. She received some attorney help in drafting the document.

In the complaint, Robinson said holiday bags were given out during the 2024-2025 school year. Brief Christian messages were contained in some of the bags while others did not have messages. She said that students were not pressured to take the gift bags and were told they could decline.

The complaint further states that in November 2024, Robinson's supervisor said she could continue passing out the bags if it was optional. In January last year, Superintendent Randy Fleenor reversed the guidance, according to the suit.

The lawsuit claims that bus camera footage was not reviewed and stressed that the gift bags were voluntary and that parents were present at the time.

According to the lawsuit, students were not required to take bags, and Robinson offered bags that accommodated other religions or did not include religious messages.

Paw Paw Village Council approves Culver's site plan

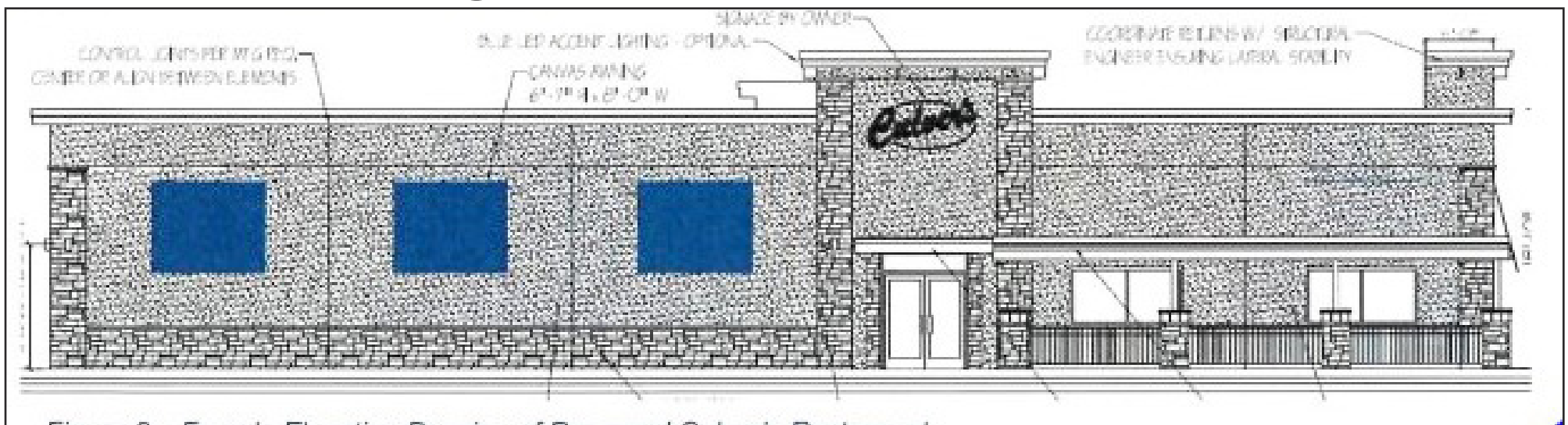

Figure 2 – Façade Elevation Drawing of Proposed Culver's Restaurant

By Paul Garrod
Staff Writer
news4garrod@gmail.com

PAW PAW – The Paw Paw Village Planning Commission met Thursday, Feb. 5, for two public hearings - a site plan review for Culver's restaurant, which has proposed building on County Road 665, near the Shell gas station, and also a site plan review for a new stage and renovations to Warner Vineyards proposed plan for its music venue.

Paw Paw Village Planning Commission Chair Kathleen Larson told Mike Brann, who attended on behalf of KBA Restaurant Group, "You had quite a response, noting the 21 letters received in favor of the fast-food restaurant planned. A physical address has not been developed yet.

With the restaurant's proposed site plan subject to change, a 4,800 square-foot building is being proposed with an anticipated August opening. Culver's is also seeking final approval from the Van Buren County Road Commission.

Bob Parshall, who owns a storage rental business across the road from the proposed Culver's location, told the Planning Commission and the audience gathered, "I'm just here to welcome Culver's. A great addition to our community."

"It's one of the cleanest site plans that we've had in a long time," said Larson.

The Planning Commission recommended approval of both the site plan and special land use permit to the Paw Paw Village Council, who approved both at the Feb. 9, village council meeting.

Larson said following the Planning Commission's unanimous recommendation for approval, "Welcome, Culver's. Well, we'll have to wait until August," she said jokingly.

Warner Vineyard's owner, Pat Warner, is proposing several changes and renovations to the music venue.

A wooden stage that had been used for concerts is being proposed to be moved from its current southern location to the northern property line, where it will become premium seating.

Warner told Planning Commission members, "Bands have turned us down because of the (small) size of the stage." According to Warner, there is an industry standard size stage that touring acts prefer and Warner's stage does not meet that standard. With a larger stage it will allow Warner's access to a wider array of acts.

In relocating the current stage to the north, Warner is proposing to place the stage on four shipping containers that would serve as its foundation. The proposed new stage would be 50 feet wide, 32 feet deep and 24 feet high. An additional row of custom fabricated shipping containers would be transformed into food bar sites, merchandise sales, and restrooms.

Warner plans to have 65 shows this year, with the season stepping off May 9.

"You're not going to do all of this?" said Larson.

"We hope too," said Warner.

Paw Paw Village Manger Bryan Myrkle told the Planning Commission, "We will work with Mr. Warner to address these issues. I think he could be in position to have a show (in May)," said Myrkle.

Warner said he is currently in negotiations with Honor Credit Union to purchase 3/10 of an acre from them, which is located on the northern end of the business.

Larson told Warner, "Your ideas are terrific. It's a plan but it doesn't meet our specifications. The next time we meet, we'll have a site plan."

Three people spoke during the public hearing's public comment.

One individual welcomed Warner's proposed venue update, while another said the sound was too loud.

Dale Wells told the Planning Commission, "I'm very supportive of what he is doing. It brings many here to the village, just like the Wine & Harvest Festival."

Chief of Police gives praise to his officers following area's recent harsh weather conditions

By Paul Garrod
Staff writer
new4garrod@gmail.com

PAW PAW - In a memo to the Paw Paw Village Council at its Monday night Feb. 9 village council meeting, Paw Paw Chief of Police Eric Rottman conveyed to the council "the excellent work your officers did under very inclement conditions."

Rottman said in the memo, "Our department responded to numerous accidents on I-94 along with the Michigan State Police and Van Buren County Sheriff's Office during the winter storm and white out conditions on Jan. 27 and 28. One included an accident at the bridge over the West Branch of the Paw Paw River on I-94. The initial crash involved two semis that collided and partially blocked the bridge. This then caused additional slide offs and accidents.

"There were additional crashes and slide-offs along I-94 from Mattawan to just west of Paw Paw throughout the day. At times the visibility was down to feet."

Rottman presented some dash cam photos "that do not do the conditions justice but give you an idea of what it was like."

He continued, "On Feb. 2, highway conditions again resulted in icy conditions. We had multiple slide-offs within village limits. This included one slide off where after just passing the officers patrol vehicle a pickup truck lost control and went into the ditch. Thankfully the vehicle missed the officer and their patrol vehicle."

Doroh elected BOC chairman

Kurt Doroh, left, was recently elected the new Van Buren County Commissioner chairman, while Paul Schincariol, was elected vice chair.

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2ND FRONT PAGE

Mattawan to present "Grease"

The Mattawan Theatre Department will present the musical, "Grease," Feb. 20, 21, 27 and 28 at 7 p.m. and matinees on Feb. 22 and March 1, at 2 p.m. For more information, visit: mattawan.ludus.com or call (269) 668-3361, ext. 1272. Courtesy photo

Payton & Annabelle bring their music to South Haven

By James Windell

"We always try to write interesting arrangements, but we really enjoy writing songs that are more complex with lyrics that are authentic."

So says Annabelle Fuerst, one half of the dynamic duo who will be performing at the Winter Concert Series at the First Congregational Church in South Haven on Sunday, February 15, 2026.

Payton & Annabelle, a couple of singers, guitarists and songwriters, have only been together five years, but they are gaining a reputation in Western Michigan as a two-some that blends folk and alternative genres with songs characterized by rich harmonies and intricate acoustic guitar arrangements.

"We know that other songwriters have been successful with simple lyrics and harmonies, but we strive for the complex chords and melodies," says Annabelle.

Both Annabelle and Payton Carter grew up in the Kalamazoo area, but they didn't meet until they came together in the Kalamazoo Academy of Rock.

"We were both members of the Kalamazoo Academy of Rock, which is an after-school program, where you get put in a band with other people," Annabelle said in a recent interview. "Payton and I did that together and we found that we enjoyed working together in class. We decided to begin working together outside of class."

That relationship has resulted in more than a hundred performances and their collaboration as a songwriting team. The duo had the honor of opening for four-time Grammy winner Sarah Jarosz at Bell's Beer Garden in July 2024, and they have performed at The Ark in Ann Arbor for the Battle of The Bands competition. They have put on concerts several times in South Haven.

In 2024, they released their first album, entitled "For the Willows." That album, which is available on streaming services, features all original songs. Payton and Annabelle describe the album as rooted in a period of beginnings and endings – Payton's first year of college and Annabelle's final year of high school. They wrote much of the album through online collaboration, then recorded it at La Luna Recording & Sound. Several songs, including "In Daydreams," "Weeping, Crying, Sobbing Willow," and "Madeline," were highlighted by the duo as especially meaningful in capturing this transitional moment in their lives. Annabelle says that they are currently working on recording their second album, which they hope will be out this summer.

When they appear at the First Congregational Church, their program will consist mostly of covers from the 1960s and 70s. "We will do a lot of Simon and Garfunkle, some Beatles tunes, and songs from various other bands from that era," says Annabelle. In addition, they will do a few of their original tunes.

As young women in the music industry they have experienced their share of sexism and adversity. "It can be hard to be taken seriously as a woman pursuing a musical career," says Annabelle. "So, we always want to do our best to help other young women to be a role model. We want to be an example for others. It's important for girls to be able to see people like us so it encourages them to do what they want to do."

To that end, they work with students in workshops to offer them encouragement and support.

Payton & Annabelle perform at 3:00 pm on Sunday, February 15, 2026, as part of the Winter Concert Series at First Congregational UCC, 651 Phoenix Street, South Haven. Tickets are $20 at the door and children 12 and under are free. For more information, call Diane and Lisa at (269) 637-3804 (opt. 5).

Life Ring encrusted in ice signals summer a long time coming

The ice encrusted life ring on South Haven's south pier stands as a stark reality that summer is still months away. Photo by Tom Renner

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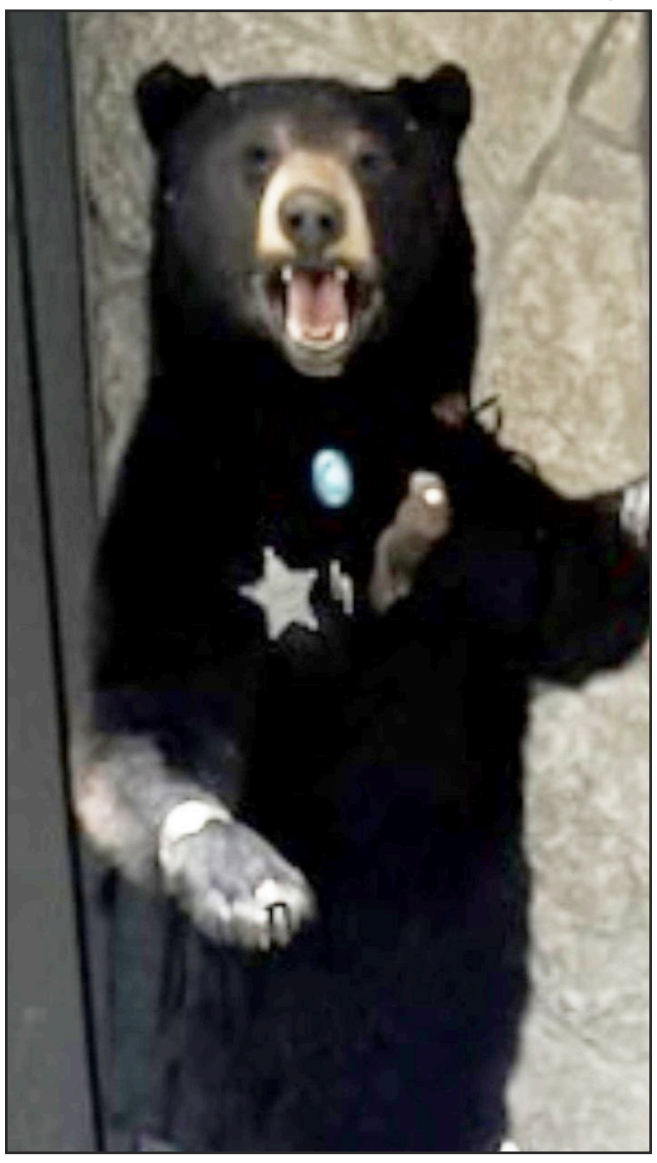
Taxidermized bear stolen from Ganges home found six miles away



Jordan Wilcox
Assistant Publisher

On Monday, January 19th, troopers with the Michigan State Police were alerted to one of the area's most grizzly crimes. A six-foot-tall, taxidermized black bear, adorned with a ring, necklace, fake sheriff's badge, and a holster holding a toy gun, was stolen from a residential porch on Lakeshore Drive in Ganges Township.

Law enforcement quickly launched an investigation, but early efforts yielded little success. After what officials later described as an unbearable search, MSP announced on February 9th that the taxidermy had been recovered less than six miles from the home where it was taken and returned to its rightful owner.

Because of the unusual and comical nature of the theft, the case drew international attention. News outlets across the United States and Europe reported on the stolen bear, and social media users flooded platforms with jokes and speculation about the bear's disappearance.

Despite the recovery, the suspect remains unidentified. Investigators are seeking a person of unknown gender with a thin to medium build, last seen on video wearing black clothing and glasses while taking the bear. Anyone with information is asked to contact the MSP Wayland Post at 269-792-2213.

Photos provided by MSP Fifth District

VBISD to host transition fair

LAWRENCE - Van Buren Intermediate School District will host a Transition Fair on Monday, March 9, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the VBISD Conference Center, 390 S. Paw Paw St., Lawrence, to support students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 Plans as they prepare for life after high school.

The event is open to Van Buren County students with IEPs or 504 Plans, along with their families, guardians, teachers, and school staff. This free event requires no registration and allows participants to attend at any time during event hours.

The Transition Fair brings together schools, families, colleges, agencies, and community organizations to share resources and opportunities that support students as they transition into adulthood. Attendees will have opportunities to explore career and employment resources, continued education and training programs, independent living supports, and community connections.

The fair will be hosted as a vendor style open house, allowing students, families, and educators to move through the event at their own pace, speak directly with service providers, and gather information relevant to their future plans.

Participating organizations include The Arc Community Advocates, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, VBISD Career and Technical Center Transition to Work Program, Van Buren Tech, Disability Services for Students, Van Buren Youth Initiative, Kalamazoo Valley Community College Office for Student Access, Adult Multilingual Education of VBISD, Michigan Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, Van Buren County Department of Health and Human Services, Van Buren Community Mental Health, Michigan Career and Technical Institute, The Ark Services for Michigan Relay Center. Disability Network Southwest Michigan, VBISD programs, and additional regional agencies.

Spa Day at Lawrence Library

LAWRENCE - VBDL Lawrence Community Branch will offer a day of pampering on Saturday, Feb. 21, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sessions include Yoga 9 to 10 a.m. (call to register), Manicures and Essential Oil Head Massage from Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD) students 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (services by appointment only, call to register), Make and Take: Body Bath Salts, Face Masks, Lip Balm and more from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (no registration needed to make products).

All sessions are offered at no cost to guests. Call (269) 674-3200 for information or to register for this event.

Hours for the Lawrence Community Branch Library, at 212 N. Paw Paw St. Lawrence, are Monday through Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For information about this or any other program, call (269) 674-3200.

Van Buren District Library is headquartered in Decatur with branches in Bangor, Bloomingdale, Covert, Decatur, Gobles, Lawrence and Mattawan.

State Police to host Employment Day

The Michigan State Police (MSP) will host a one-stop Employment Day hiring event on Saturday, Feb. 21, at Kalamazoo Valley Community College's Texas Township Campus starting at 8 a.m.

This event offers a convenient opportunity to apply for the department's trooper, motor carrier officer and lateral entry recruit schools that all begin in July. "At this event, we will be hiring troopers, motor carrier officers and state properties security officers," said Col. James F. Grady II, director of the MSP. "We are especially encouraging licensed police officers to attend because we have a lateral entry school that will also begin in July."

Attendees can complete several steps of the hiring process at this event, including:

- Application assistance for desired recruit school
- Baseline fitness testing
- National Testing Network Entry Level Law Enforcement Exam
- Preliminary criminal history check
- Hiring interview

Interested individuals must RSVP to confirm a spot and receive additional event information. Registration is limited to 300 attendees.

To learn more about a career with the MSP, visit www.michigan.gov/mspjobs.

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Mattawan athlete enjoying strong senior season

Brooke Steeves was a Mattawan volleyball senior.

By John Raffel
Correspondent

MATTAWAN— Brooke Steeves is coming off her senior volleyball season for Mattawan and it was a memorable one.

Mattawan won a district title and Steevea also was on a district titles as a sophomore.

It was a goiak for Steeves and her teammates to win a district title again.

"It's been a great journey so far," she said.

After winning the district 3-0 over St. Joseph, Mattawan went to the regionals and lost 3-0 to Byron Center. The final record was 22-19.

"We have a really good team and a lot of great girls who all get along very well," Steeves said. "They are all my best friends. Everyday we come to practice to work our butts off and get to where we are."

To win the district title match over a solid St. Jospeh team, "we played as a team and for each other, Our confidence was a highlight of the match."

Steeves has set since the sixth grade.

She recalls it was her decision to set so she could get touches on the ball.

"I feel I've been kind of a natural leader," Steeves said. "I felt I could make a good impact on my team"

The key to success in that spot is "being able to run an effective offense and be a good leader and realize where you hitters need the ball. I feel my leadership has improved in helping everyone in their own individual way. I think I've learned a lot."

Steeves also plans to play lacrosse in the spring with her sister for the first time.

But it was a special volleyball season for Steeves.

Lawrence girls improve to 9-7

By John Raffel
Correspondent

LAWRENCE — Lawrence's girls basketball team improved to 9-7 on Feb. 9 with a 45-38 win over St. Jospeh Our Lady of the Lake Catholic.

On Feb. 6, Lawrence had a 47-31 win over Marcellus.

Top scorers for Lawrence included freshman Meeghan Haas with 18 points. They all came on six threes which ties a school record.

Junior Colleen McCaw had 14 points.

Senior Kaylin Leyva had 10 points.

Lawrence last week lost to Athens 43-21 and defeated Bloomingdale 52-34

Coming up will be a road game at Comstock on Feb. 10, at Cassopolis on Feb. 13, at Hartford on Feb. 17 at White Pigeon Feb. 19.

The Lawrence boys are 10-8 after losing to Wyoming West Michigan Lutheran 79-69 on Feb. 9. They beat Marcellus 44-34.

Lawrence will be at Cassopolis on Feb 13.

Bangor girls improve to 8-7

By John Raffel
Correspondent

BANGOR — Bangor's girls basketball team improved to 8-7 with 48-34 win over Comstock on Feb. 4.

Izzy Horvath had 13 points including nine in the fourth quarter for Bangor.

Ceilo Maldonado had 11 points for Bangor.

The winner also helped themselves in other areas. Maldonado had 10 points and Izzy Horvath had four Horvath had three assists as did Madison Lennox. Horvath had three steals.

Bangor trailed 8-6 after the first quarter and 18-16 at halftime. But Bangor outscored Comstock 30-18 in the second half.

Desiree Anderson had 18 points for Comstock.

Bangor is 8-8 after losing to Decatur at home 33-24 on Feb. 6.

Horvath had eight points and Lennox had seven for Bangor. Amiyah Corona had four rebounds. Belle Macedo had four steals. Lexi Wisniewski and Amiyah Corona had two assists apiece.

Bangor will be at Cassopolis on Feb. 10, at Hartford on Feb. 13 and home with Centreville on Feb 17 and Bloomingdale on Feb. 20

Bloomingdale picks up huge win over Lawrence

By John Raffel
Correspondent

BLOOMINGDALE — Bloomingdale turned in a memorable home performance Tuesday night (Feb. 3), defeating Lawrence 70-53 to secure its fourth straight victory over the Tigers and continue its push in the Southwest 10 race.

Javon Pittsley led the way with a game-high 34 points and reached the 1,000-point milestone for his career, becoming just one of a handful of players in Bloomingdale boys basketball history to achieve the mark.

Aiden Byers followed with 20 points and played excellent interior defense, controlling the paint on both ends of the floor. Bradyn Bard continued his strong offensive play, adding nine points to help the Cardinals build and maintain separation in the second half.

Bloomingdale combined efficient offense with steady defensive pressure to control the tempo throughout the night, limiting Lawrence's scoring opportunities and closing out the game with composure.

The win improves Bloomingdale to 10-5 overall and 9-3 in Southwest 10 play, keeping the Cardinals one game behind the conference leaders as the race tightens down the stretch.

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Paw Paw wrestlers enjoy place finishes

By John Raffel
Correspondent

PAW PAW — Paw Paw's wrestling team had some Wolverine Conference varsity placers from Saturday's meet.

Kholby Armijo was 165-pound Wolverine Conference champion with Team all-conference honors. Kameron Armijo was fourth place

Gunner Gale was also fourth place.

Victor Armijo is the Paw Paw head varsity coach.

Kholby Armco pinned Aiden Beck in the semifinals in 3:41 and beat Braylon Faile of Three Rivers 16-0.

Victor Armijo was pinned in the semifinals by Cale Myers of Edwardsburg in 5:33. Armijo beat Micah Young in the consolation semifinals 17-7 but lost to Alex Valdez in the third-place match.

Gale started the day with a 2-0 decision over Truman Summerer of Plainwell. He defeated Caige McNeese of Otsego 18-10. He lost 18-10 to Max Rucker of Niles in the match for third place.

Aaron Quiles at 285 lost his two matches for the day.

Paw Paw this week will wrestle team districts on Wednesday and individual districts on Saturday hopes of advancing to regionals next week.

Mattawan wins second straight game

By John Raffel
Correspondent

MATTAWAN — Mattawan's girls basketball team picked up their second win in a row with the 41-25 win at Lakeshore Monday night, Feb. 9.

Charlotte Douglass had 14, Caitlin Ryan nine, and Savannah Waterlander nine for Mattawan

Mattawan led 21-10 at the half. Sydney Thomas led Lakeshore with 13 points.

Mattawan returns to action Tuesday at K-Central for their fifth game in nine days.

Mattawan will play at home on Feb. 13 against Battle Creek Lakeview and is at Portage Northern on Feb. 16. There is also a makeup game at home with St. Joseph on Feb. 18.

Mattawan plays at Richland Gull Lake on Feb. 20.

Mattawan beat St. Joseph 44-35 on Feb. 6 and lost to Portage Central 50-40 on Feb. 3 and to Loy Norris 38-26 on Feb. 2.

Mattawan ski team continues to succeed

By John Raffel

Coach Jennifer Roethlisberger'a Mattawan/Paw Paw Ski Team had a conference meet on at Timber Ridge.

"This was a makeup race from the race two weeks ago that had to be called off due to poor snow conditions," Roethlisberger said. "The snow conditions were great this evening and so was the performance of the teams. The girls team finished 1st in slalom and 1st in giant slalom which made them the evening's champions on the girl's side of the meet.

Individual Honors:

Giant Slalom: Anna Hoogerheide - 1st Place; Zoey Guyman - 4th Place; Julie Navratilova - 5th Place; Tessa Brown - 7th Place; Liz VerSteeg - 8th Place

Slalom: Anna Hoogerheide - 1st Place; Avery Huff - 3rd Place; Julie Navratilova - 4th Place; Liz Versteeg - 5th Place; Tessa Brown - 8th Place

The Boys Team had a few stumbles and falls. Through all of it, they finished 1st in Giant Slalom, and 2nd in Slalom. Their efforts paid off, and they came out as the winners of the Boy's Teams just slipping by a very strong Kalamazoo United team.

Individual Honors:

Giant Slalom: JT Roethlisberger - 3rd Place; Caleb Terpstra - 6th Placel Anderson Farnquist - 10th Place.

Slalom: Mason Allen - 5th Place; Noah Bentz - 6th Place; Caleb Terpstra - 8th Place; Jacob Block - 9th Place,

The team races again at Timber Ridge die Teacher Appreciation night and "the team will be honoring teachers that helped make them the great human beings that they are.

"It was a beautiful evening for ski racing. The team was able to honor the teachers in their lives that have made an impact. After the teachers were honored they also got to witness a dominating performance by both the Boys and Girls Teams.

The boys team won in Giant Slalom and Slalom, just edging out Kalamazoo United by a score of 28-22 in Giant Slalom and a score of 30-26 in Slalom which ended up in an overall win by 10 points.

Individual Honors:

Giant Slalom: Mason Allen - 4th Place JT Roethlisberger - 5th Place Tie; Everett Allen - 5th Place Tie/ Caleb Terpstra - 7th Place.

Slalom: JT Roethlisberger - 2nd Place; Everett Allen - 5th Place; Caleb Terpstra -mm 8th Place

The girls team won both Giant Slalom and Slalom handily. They had a total team score of 31 points and the next lowest scoring team was Hackett / Vicksburg with 67 points.

Individual Honors:

Giant Slalom: Anna Hoogerheide - 1st Place; Tessa Brown - 2nd Place; Avery Huff - 5th Place; Julie Navratilova - 7th Place.

Slalom: Anna Hoogerheide - 1st Place; Avery Huff - 4th Place; Zoey Guyman - 5th Place; Julie Navratilova - 6th Place; Tessa Brown - 8th Place.

At Cannonsburg for the Summit Law Slalom Invitational

"This race was by grade. Awards were given to the top 5 racers in each with an additional award for the fastest on the hill for the day," Roethlisberger said.

Mattawan/Paw Paw had the following racers place in the top 5 in their respective divisions

10th grade Girls 4th place Avery Huff.

11th grade Girls 2nd place Anna HoogerHeide.

12th grade Boys 2nd place Mason Allen.

12th grade Boys 1st place and fastest on the hill JT Roethlisberger.

Lawrence "Snowcoming" royalty named

Colleen McCaw and Karter Everhart were named queen and king during Friday night's Feb. 6, basketball Snowcoming game. Photo courtesy/Tom Reynnells

Lawton homecoming court named

Lawton Community Schools held its Homecoming Friday night, Feb. 6. Selected as queen was Gia Bridges, shown above, while Ben Kucinich was named king. Courier-Leader photo/Paul Garrod

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VIEWPOINT

Why the U.S. Needs Voter ID

MIKE'S MUSINGS

MIKE WILCOX
PUBLISHER

Few issues in American politics spark as much debate as election integrity. Yet beneath all the noise, there lies a straightforward truth: in a system built on trust, legitimacy, and the belief that every eligible vote counts, we should embrace basic safeguards that protect the process. Among the simplest and most common-sense of these safeguards is Voter ID.

At its core, Voter ID is not a radical concept. It's a reflection of how we handle countless other important transactions in daily life. We show identification to board a plane, pick up a prescription, cash a check, enter a government building, or even buy certain over-the-counter items. These interactions pale in significance compared to the act of choosing our leaders. If we require an ID to rent a movie car, how unreasonable is it to require one to cast a vote.

Critics often argue that Voter ID laws suppress turnout, particularly among disadvantaged groups. But this claim doesn't hold up against real-world experience. Many states with Voter ID laws have seen no drop in participation, some have even seen increases. Studies are mixed, yes, but the principle remains: ensuring integrity should not be dismissed simply because implementation requires thoughtful policy. Instead of abandoning the idea, we should focus on making IDs accessible and free, ensuring that no eligible voter is left behind. The solution to barriers is not eliminating security, it's eliminating the barriers.

Voter confidence is another crucial factor. In an era where election distrust has become a bipartisan problem, restoring faith in the system is essential. Even if instances of in-person voter fraud are statistically rare, public confidence is not measured in statistics—it's measured in perception. When nearly half the country doubts the fairness of elections, implementing reasonable, broadly supported measures can help rebuild trust. Voter ID is one of the least intrusive, most widely understood steps we can take.

Moreover, Voter ID requirements help maintain clean voter rolls by complementing other election-management practices. They make impersonation and double-voting more difficult, help confirm residency, and ensure that ballots reflect the choices of actual, eligible citizens. Even if fraud is infrequent, the consequences of just one illegitimate vote are real: it cancels out a legitimate one. Upholding the value of every citizen's ballot requires us to protect the system from vulnerabilities that are easy to fix.

There's also a fairness element. Many Americans already believe—rightly or wrongly—that other people are gaming the system. When some states require no verification at the polls while others do, it creates inconsistency that fuels suspicion. National elections should have baseline national standards. Uniform voter identification rules, paired with accessible, government-issued IDs, level the playing field and ensure every vote across every state is subject to the same standard of scrutiny.

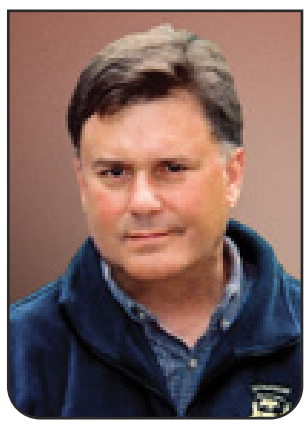
Finally, implementing Voter ID is not an act of exclusion; it can be an act of empowerment. Ensuring every adult citizen has a valid ID has benefits well beyond voting—access to employment, housing, banking, and safety net programs. A nationwide initiative to guarantee free, easy-to-obtain identification could strengthen both our democracy and our social infrastructure.

The right to vote is sacred. And like all sacred things, it deserves protection. Voter ID is not a cure-all, nor should it be the only measure we consider. But it is a simple, reasonable step that brings the United States in line with the majority of democracies around the world. If we want elections that are above suspicion, trusted by all, and reflective of the will of the people, then implementing Voter ID—fairly, universally, and accessibly—is not only prudent. It's necessary.

Congress needs to act. Voter ID requirements ought to be the law of the land. Arguments against it are weak. Over 70 percent of minorities favor voter ID. It only makes sense.

February 12th

By Cameron S. Brown



Cameron S. Brown is president of the Kalamazoo Abraham Lincoln Institute and a former Michigan State Senator. Follow him at www.HistoryFrontiers.blog.

Nancy Hanks Lincoln would carry her memories of February 12th for less than a decade until death swept her into eternity at the age of 34. America, on the other hand, has had the privilege of celebrating this honored date for generations. The arrival of Nancy Lincoln's baby boy was nothing out of the ordinary, except perhaps for his birth on a Sunday—the Lord's Day. He was just one more child born to impoverished parents struggling to survive in the wilderness of the American frontier. His was an inauspicious birth in a log cabin with a dirt floor—the humblest of beginnings, not unlike the cradle birth of the first-century Christ child. Nancy's son was given the name of his paternal grandfather, Abraham. Young Abraham was nine when his mother died. He and his sister grieved her loss.

Nancy Lincoln would never know what we know that the legacy of her son has inspired generations the world over. This year marks the 217th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth on February 12, 1809. Coincidentally, the same birth month as his mother and sister Sarah. Two centuries later, kids unfailingly see in Lincoln how appealing honesty and good character can be because Lincoln is so tangible to them: the beard and stovepipe hat and log cabin birth. So, what would Lincoln say were he alive today? Would he speak plainly in the homespun tenor voice of his endless storytelling that always carried a lesson to be learned, or would his superlative words echo the lofty eloquence of his Gettysburg Address? We will never know for sure, but from his vantage point of history, he would likely be steadfast for the rule of law and fidelity to the Constitution.

He would encourage our commitment to the purpose of our nation's founding. We will never fully understand Lincoln until we fully appreciate his profound patriotism rooted in America's profession of God-given rights that cannot be taken away.

Abraham Lincoln was a disruptor, challenging the old order of slavery. And despite presiding over the most divisive time in our nation's history, he proved to be a uniter and healer. He was in the words of the prophet Isaiah, "the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in." Lincoln gave America the challenge to embrace a "new birth of freedom" spoken of at the Gettysburg National Cemetery. That challenge remains for us today.

America's founding was birthed in the bloom of the Enlightenment and in the Judeo-Christian ethos of Western Civilization. We will endure as a nation of promise as Lincoln envisioned as long as we exercise wise stewardship of the gift bequeathed to us by the Founders. The consequence of unbridled immigration without assimilation by a culture at odds with the heritage of our founding is a Trojan horse! We must not be all open and have no mind. Like Lincoln, we have a mission to protect and defend the great work for which he gave "the last full measure of devotion."

Lawrence girls varsity basketball standout reaches 1,000 points

Lawrence Tigers varsity girls' basketball senior standout, Carolina Mancera, reached a milestone, the 1,000-point club in a recent game against Bangor.

Photo courtesy/ Lawrence Public Schools

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Eleanor's Pantry

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of our donors, supporters, and partners within our entire community (Lawton and Paw Paw) and beyond this past year for your generous food donations and monetary donations and unwavering support in our fight against food insecurity. Thank you for all the support this year! Every business, community organization, church, and individual make a difference. This year has brought about increased need in our communities but also so many blessings.

Your contributions have made a significant impact, enabling us to provide much-needed assistance to local residents facing food insecurity and helping families in need. Together, we are making a real difference and are building a stronger community with a reputation for taking care of its own.

Many of our guests have expressed their gratitude, particularly during the suspension of the SNAP benefits this Fall. During that time our guest visits increased considerably. A significant rise in food prices and general cost of living is another factor for increased visit frequency to Eleanor's Pantry. A visit to the pantry during such times provides reassurance to individuals and families alike that there will be something nourishing to provide at mealtimes.

What does food insecurity mean? How might it affect the daily experiences of someone struggling to keep food on the table? Our guests face daily struggles to make ends meet within our communities and come to us as seniors, disabled persons, veterans, single parents, homeless, and many guests falling under the definition of ALICE: Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, and Employed.) They are working and earning money, but what they earn still can't cover the rising costs of the basics. As a result, they can't save money, so their assets are limited. The ALICE Report is the most comprehensive estimate to date of what it costs to live and work in Michigan, and who can afford it. 1 in 4 Michigan households earn above the poverty line, but not enough to cover the basics. You can find more information on ALICE and some specifics with regard to our Paw Paw and Lawton communities by visiting: https://www.uwmich.org/alice-report

We are humbled by our community support. We have such caring people who rise to so many occasions to make a difference in someone's life. I would be amiss if I didn't mention, last but not least, our pantry volunteers. Our volunteers of approximately 50 individuals give their time toward the many needs of the pantry, whether it is assisting in shopping, taking inventory, stocking, community outreach, operations, building maintenance or serving on its board.

We live in a community that gives generously, and that many of us get to call home. It doesn't get better than that.

With Sincere Appreciation,

Sue Miller

Executive Director, Eleanor's Pantry

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STATE OF MICHIGAN
36TH CIRCUIT COURT
FOR THE COUNTY OF VAN BUREN
2025 -075140 - CZ
HONORABLE Susan Metzger

SHIRLEY GANT, Plaintiff,
V.
LECHIA CONRAD and THE ESTATE OF ANTHONY A. GANT, Defendants.

Justin Breithaupt (P81259)
Attorney for Plaintiff
Herbert Machnik Law Firm 5830 Venture Park Drive Kalamazoo, MI 49009
(269) 459-1432

EXPARTE ORDER FOR ALTERNATE SERVICE
At a session of said Court held in the City of Paw Paw, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan, on the 12th day of December, 2025.
PRESENT: Honorable Susan Metzger
After reviewing Plaintiffs' Motion for Alternate Service, and the Court being fully advised in the premises, The court finds, pursuant to MCR 2.106(D)(1) and MCR 2.201(D)(3) that service of process by publication is the best available method of service of process reasonably calculated to give Defendants Lechia Conrad and The Estate of Anthony A. Gant actual notice of the proceedings and an opportunity to be heard.
IT IS ORDERED:
Plaintiff may serve process on Defendants Lechia Conrad and the Estate of Anthony A Gant by publication pursuant to MCR 2.106(D)(1) and MCR 2.201(D)(3). The publication will be done by Wilcox Papers (The Courier-Leader) Van Buren County and shall be published for (3) consecutive weeks:
"An action seeking to quiet title to the property located at CR 687, South Haven, MI 49090 in favor of Plaintiff Shirely Gant has been commenced against Lechia Conrad and the Estate of Anthony A Gant in the Van Buren 36th Circuit Court for the State of Michigan. Defendant must answer or take other action permitted by law within 28 days after the last date of publication of this notice. If a Defendant does not answer or take other action within the time allowed, judgment affecting the Defendant's interests may be entered as requested in the Complaint."
Plaintiff shall also affix a copy of the summons and complaint to the door of the subject property, 03331 CR 687, South Haven, MI 49090.
This is not a final order and does not close the case.
Dated: 12/12125
Susan Metzger
Signed:
Honorable Susan Metzger

State of Michigan
Probate Court
County of Van Buren
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
DECEDENT'S TRUST ESTATE
File No.
DECEDENT: LAUREL L. SHERBURN
Date of Birth: October 17,1939
TO ALL CREDITORS:
NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, Laurel L. Sherburn, who lived at 52131 Sheridan Rd., Paw Paw, Michigan 49079 died December 7, 2025. There is no probate estate.
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against **LAUREL L. SHERBURN OR THE DALE L. SHERBURN AND LAUREL L. SHERBURN REVOCABLE LIVING TRUST dated May 7, 2023, as amended and restated in total on August 5, 2024,** will be forever barred unless presented to **Tracie L. Sherburn,** the named successor trustee within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
February 3, 2026
Attorney:
William B Millard #P39054
DeMent and Marquardt, PLC
211 E. Water Street, Suite 401
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
269-343-2106
Trustee:
Tracie L. Sherburn
P.O.Box 431
Portage, MI 49081
269-341-2373

State of Michigan
Probate Court
Van Buren County
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
DECEDENT'S ESTATE
Case No. 2026-1018-DE
Estate of Lisa Mary Hoag,
Date of birth: April 18,1966
TO ALL CREDITORS
NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, **Lisa Mary Hoag,** died January 10, 2026.
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to **Jordan Hoag,** personal representative, or to both the probate court at 212 E. Paw Paw Street #220, Paw Paw, MI 49079 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.
February 6,2026
Attorney Name:
Elizabeth Robinson #P84345
4341 South Westnedge Avenue., Ste 1200
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
269-344-0700
Personal Representative:
Jordan Hoag
24365 3rd Avenue
Mttawan, MI 49071
913-238-2230

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the Matter of the **PATRICK L. AND ROBEN B. KLOCKE JOINT REVOCABLE TRUST**
Dated April 19, 2001, as amended
TO ALL CREDITORS:
The Grantor, ROBEN B. KLOCKE (date of birth: June 10, 1955), who lived at 51982 Pleasant Drive, Mattawan, MI 49071, died January 21, 2026. There is no personal representative of the Grantor's estate to whom Letters of Authority have been issued.
Creditors of ROBEN B. KLOCKE, deceased, are notified that all claims against ROBEN B. KLOCKE or the PATRICK L. AND ROBEN B. KLOCKE JOINT REVOCABLE TRUST DATED April 19, 2001, as amended, will be forever barred unless presented to ROBERT P. KLOCKE, Trustee, within four (4) months after the date of publication.
Notice is further given that the Trust assets will thereafter be assigned and distributed to the persons entitled thereto.
Date: February 5, 2026.

PATRICK L. AND ROBEN B. KLOCKE JOINT REVOCABLE TRUST DATED APRIL 19, 2001, AS AMENDED
ROBERT P. KLOCKE,
Co-Trustee
51982 Pleasant Drive,
Mattawan, MI 49071 and
LEANNE R. KLOCKE,
Co-Trustee
29 Lester Ct., Brooklyn, NY 11229

KREIS, ENDERLE, HUDGINS & BORSOS, P.C.
JAMES D. LANCE (P68202)
Attorneys for Trustee
One West Michigan Avenue
Battle Creek, MI 49017
(269) 966-3000

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Douglas A Clark; Atty: SOTTILE and BARILE PLLC - SOTTILE and BARILE PLLC; 1st Pub: 2/12/2026; Atty File #: MF2512008; Insurer: (unknown)
NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE
THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION WE OBTAIN WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT THE NUMBER BELOW IF YOU ARE IN ACTIVE DUTY.
ATTN PURCHASERS: This sale may be rescinded by the foreclosing mortgagee. In that event, your damages, if any, shall be limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest.
ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Under the power of sale contained herein in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or a cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in VAN BUREN County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on March 19, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE SALE – Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Douglas A. Clark and Brenda M. Clark, a married couple, original mortgagors, to Citifinancial, Inc., dated March 18, 2009, and recorded March 31, 2009 in Liber 1516, Page 577, in VAN BUREN County records, Michigan, and assigned to CitiFinancial Servicing LLC, a Delaware Limited Liability Company by an Assignment of Mortgage recorded on June 30, 2017 in Liber 1654, Page 815, and assigned to Bayview Loan Servicing, LLC, a Delaware Limited Liability Company by an Assignment of Mortgage recorded on June 30, 2017 in Liber 1654, Page 816, and assigned to Nationstar Mortgage LLC by an Assignment of Mortgage recorded on September 20, 2022 in Liber 1743, Page 666 and assigned to U.S. Bank Trust National Association, as Trustee of the LB-TIKI Series V Trust by an Assignment of Mortgage recorded on May 8, 2023 in Liber1752, Page 618 and assigned to U.S. Bank Trust National Association, as Trustee of the LB-Ranch Series V Trust by an Assignment of Mortgage recorded on May 8, 2023 in Liber 1752, Page 619, and, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Ninety Two Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Nine and 74/100 dollars ($92,959.74). Said premises are situated in the City of DOWAGIAC, County of VAN BUREN, and State of Michigan, and particularly described as: Lot 3, Lakeland Terrace according to the recorded plat thereof, as recorded in Liber 5 of Plats, Page 35, Van Buren County Records Property Address:66901 M 152, Dowagiac, Michigan 49047 Parcel No.: 80-12-120-002-00 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Dated: February 12, 2026 For more information, please call: (513) 444-4100 Sottile and Barile PLLC Attorneys for Plaintiff 394 Wards Corner Boulevard, Suite 180 Loveland, OH 45140 File MF2512008 - Moore, Brenda - JR
(02-14)(03-07)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Mervin E Mortimore Jr; Atty: BETTER CHOICE NOTICE SOLUTIONS - BETTER CHOICE NOTICE SOLUTIONS; 1st Pub: 2/5/2026; Atty File #: 25-34417; Insurer: (unknown)
NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following Mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 01:00 PM, on March 12, 2026. The amount due on the Mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. Default has been made in the conditions of a Mortgage made by Mervin E. Mortimore, Jr. Marr and Lori Mortimore Marr to Fifth Third Bank (Western Michigan) dated September 9, 2003 and recorded September 25, 2003 in Liber 1396 at Page 631, Van Buren County, Michigan. Said Mortgage is now held by Fifth Third Bank, National Association by assignment and/or merger. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of $66,383.42. Said premises are located in Van Buren County, Michigan and are described as: 04048925/74201 28th Street, Lawton, MI, 49065 Property located in the Township of Porter, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan Parcel # 80-16-003-011-00 THE NORTH 17 3/8 ACRES OF THE WEST 136 ACRES OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 3, TOWN 4 SOUTH, RANGE 13 WEST, ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNMENT SURVEY THEREOF. INSURANCE Said property is commonly known as 74201 28TH ST, Lawton, MI 49065. The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period. TO ALL PURCHASERS: The foreclosing mortgagee can rescind the sale. In that event, your damages, if any, are limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest. Please be advised that any third party purchaser is responsible for preparing and recording the Sheriff's Deed. If this is a residential Mortgage, the following shall apply: ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the Mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR. THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT, AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. IF YOU: ARE A DEBTOR IN AN ACTIVE BANKRUPTCY CASE; ARE UNDER THE PROTECTION OF A BANKRUPTCY STAY; OR, HAVE RECEIVED A DISCHARGE IN BANKRUPTCY AND YOU HAVE NOT REAFFIRMED THE DEBT, THIS NOTICE IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS AN ATTEMPT TO COLLECT A DEBT FROM YOU PERSONALLY. Dated: January 29, 2026 Attorney for the party foreclosing the Mortgage: Thomas E. McDonald (P39312) Brock & Scott, PLLC 5431 Oleander Drive Wilmington, NC 28403 PHONE: (844) 856-6646 File No. 25-34417
(02-05)(02-26)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Kevin R. Brown; Atty: Orlans; 1st Pub: 2/5/2026; Atty File #: 26-000823; Insurer: GNMA
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM on MARCH 5, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Kevin R. Brown, a married man, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Mortgage 1 Incorporated, Mortgagee, dated May 25, 2022 and recorded May 27, 2022 in Liber 1738, Page 661 Van Buren County Records, Michigan. Said mortgage is now held by Siwell Inc. DBA Capital Mortgage Services of Texas, by assignment. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of One Hundred Ninety-Eight Thousand One Hundred Sixty-Six and 69/100 Dollars ($198,166.69).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Van Buren County, Michigan at 1:00 PM on MARCH 5, 2026.
Said premises are located in the Township of Almena, Van Buren County Michigan, and are described as:
Lot 9, FILIPUNAS PLAT, according to the plat thereof as recorded in Liber 5 of Plats, Page 100, Van Buren County Records.
47041 County Road 653, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period.
Dated: February 5, 2026
File No. 26-000823
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400
(02-05)(02-26)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Phyllicia Eubanks; Atty: Team J; 1st Pub: 2/5/2026; Atty File #: 512288F04; Insurer: (unknown)
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on March 26, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Phyllicia J. Eubanks, a single woman
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): U.S. BANK TRUST NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, NOT IN ITS INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY BUT SOLELY AS OWNER TRUSTEE FOR RCF 2 EBO TRUST
Date of Mortgage: February 13, 2020
Date of Mortgage Recording: February 21, 2020
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $251,108.77
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Village of Lawton, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: LOT 9, NORTH POINT WOODS, AS RECORDED IN LIBER 8 OF PLATS, PAGE 167, VAN BUREN COUNTY RECORDS.
Common street address (if any): 1015 Point Way, Lawton, MI 49065-8797
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: February 5, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1583929
(02-05)(02-26)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: RON CRAFT; Atty: Schneiderman & Sherman, P.C. - Schneiderman & Sherman, PC; 1st Pub: 1/29/2026; Atty File #: 25-002098-3; Insurer: (unknown)
SHORT FORECLOSURE NOTICE - VAN BUREN COUNTY Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on February 26, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
MORTGAGE INFORMATION: Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Mark A. Redfern and Lori Redfern, husband and wife, whose address is 52757 48th Avenue, Lawrence, Michigan 49064, as original Mortgagors, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Caliber Home Loans, Inc., being a mortgage dated July 6, 2018, and recorded on July 10, 2018 in Liber 1670 Page 995, Van Buren County Records, State of Michigan and then assigned through mesne assignments to NewRez LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing, as assignee as documented by an assignment dated November 8, 2023 and recorded on November 8, 2023 in Liber 1759 Page 25, Van Buren County Records, Michigan, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-SIX THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED SEVENTY-TWO AND 39/100 DOLLARS ($166,872.39).
Said premises are situated in the Township of Lawrence, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan, and are described as: PART OF THE NORTHEAST FRACTIONAL QUARTER OF FRACTIONAL SECTION 4, TOWN 3 SOUTH, RANGE 15 WEST, LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP, VAN BUREN COUNTY, MICHIGAN, DESCRIBED AS COMMENCING AT THE NORTH QUARTER POST OF SAID SECTION 4: THENCE EAST ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION 716.50 FEET TO THE WEST LINE OF A PARCEL OF LAND DESCRIBED IN A QUIT CLAIM DEED RECORDED IN LIBER 1133 ON PAGE 991 AND THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE LAND HEREIN DESCRIBED; THENCE CONTINUING EAST ALONG SAID NORTH LINE 15.00 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 00 DEGREES 40' 29" EAST, PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH AND SOUTH QUARTER LINE OF SAID SECTION 393.42 FEET; THENCE WEST PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION 25.40 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 00 DEGREES 40' 29" EAST, PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH AND SOUTH QUARTER LINE OF SAID SECTION 390.00 FEET; THENCE EAST PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION 458.00 FEET TO A LINE WHICH IS 1164.10 FEET EAST OF AND PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH AND SOUTH QUARTER LINE OF SAID SECTION; THENCE SOUTH 00 DEGREES 40' 29" EAST, ALONG THE LAST DESCRIBED LINE 676.565 FEET TO THE SOUTH LINE OF THE NORTH FRACTIONAL HALF OF SAID NORTHEAST FRACTIONAL QUARTER, ALSO BEING THE SOUTH LINE OF A PARCEL OF LAND DESCRIBED IN A MEMORANDUM OF LAND CONTRACT RECORDED IN LIBER 1046 ON PAGE 21; THENCE NORTH 89 DEGREES 26' 32" WEST, ALONG SAID SOUTH LINE 488.08 FEET TO A LINE WHICH IS 676.10 FEET EAST OF AND PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH AND SOUTH QUARTER LINE OF SAID SECTION, ALSO BEING THE WEST LINE OF A PARCEL OF LAND DESCRIBED IN A WARRANTY DEED RECORDED IN LIBER 0878 ON PAGE 038 OF VAN BUREN COUNTY RECORDS; THENCE NORTH 00 DEGREES 40' 29" WEST, ALONG THE LAST DESCRIBED LINE, 1237.233 FEET TO A LINE WHICH IS 218 FEET SOUTHERLY OF AND PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION; THENCE EAST ALONG THE LAST DESCRIBED LINE 40.40 FEET TO A LINE WHICH IS 716.50 FEET EAST OF AND PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH AND SOUTH QUARTER LINE OF SAID SECTION, ALSO BEING THE WEST LINE OF A PARCEL OF LAND DESCRIBED IN A QUIT CLAIM DEED RECORDED IN LIBER 1133 ON PAGE 991 OF VAN BUREN COUNTY RECORDS; THENCE NORTH 00 DEGREES 40' 29" WEST, ALONG THE FAST DESCRIBED LINE 218.00 FEET TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING. Street Address: 52757 48th Avenue, Lawrence, Michigan 49064 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA § 600.3241a in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of the sale. If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCLA § 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WE OBTAIN WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE.
Dated: January 29, 2026 For more information, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing: Robert A. Blumberg (P87490), Johnson, Blumberg, & Associates, LLC, 30 North LaSalle St., Suite 3650 Chicago, Illinois, 60602. Telephone: (312) 541-9710 File No.: MI 26 6935
(01-29)(02-19)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Mark A Redfern; Atty: Johnson, Blumberg, and Associates - Johnson, Blumberg, and Associates ; 1st Pub: 1/29/2026; Atty File #: MI 26 6935; Insurer: (unknown)
NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in VAN BUREN County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on February 26, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Mark A. Redfern and Lori Redfern, husband and wife, whose address is 52757 48th Avenue, Lawrence, Michigan 49064, as original Mortgagors, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Caliber Home Loans, Inc., being a mortgage dated July 6, 2018, and recorded on July 10, 2018 in Liber 1670 Page 995, Van Buren County Records, State of Michigan and then assigned through mesne assignments to NewRez LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing, as assignee as documented by an assignment dated November 8, 2023 and recorded on November 8, 2023 in Liber 1759 Page 25, Van Buren County Records, Michigan, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-SIX THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED SEVENTY-TWO AND 39/100 DOLLARS ($166,872.39).
Said premises are situated in the Township of Lawrence, County of Van Buren, State of Michigan, and are described as: PART OF THE NORTHEAST FRACTIONAL QUARTER OF FRACTIONAL SECTION 4, TOWN 3 SOUTH, RANGE 15 WEST, LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP, VAN BUREN COUNTY, MICHIGAN, DESCRIBED AS COMMENCING AT THE NORTH QUARTER POST OF SAID SECTION 4: THENCE EAST ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION 716.50 FEET TO THE WEST LINE OF A PARCEL OF LAND DESCRIBED IN A QUIT CLAIM DEED RECORDED IN LIBER 1133 ON PAGE 991 AND THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE LAND HEREIN DESCRIBED; THENCE CONTINUING EAST ALONG SAID NORTH LINE 15.00 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 00 DEGREES 40' 29" EAST, PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH AND SOUTH QUARTER LINE OF SAID SECTION 393.42 FEET; THENCE WEST PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION 25.40 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 00 DEGREES 40' 29" EAST, PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH AND SOUTH QUARTER LINE OF SAID SECTION 390.00 FEET; THENCE EAST PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION 458.00 FEET TO A LINE WHICH IS 1164.10 FEET EAST OF AND PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH AND SOUTH QUARTER LINE OF SAID SECTION; THENCE SOUTH 00 DEGREES 40' 29" EAST, ALONG THE LAST DESCRIBED LINE 676.565 FEET TO THE SOUTH LINE OF THE NORTH FRACTIONAL HALF OF SAID NORTHEAST FRACTIONAL QUARTER, ALSO BEING THE SOUTH LINE OF A PARCEL OF LAND DESCRIBED IN A MEMORANDUM OF LAND CONTRACT RECORDED IN LIBER 1046 ON PAGE 21; THENCE NORTH 89 DEGREES 26' 32" WEST, ALONG SAID SOUTH LINE 488.08 FEET TO A LINE WHICH IS 676.10 FEET EAST OF AND PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH AND SOUTH QUARTER LINE OF SAID SECTION, ALSO BEING THE WEST LINE OF A PARCEL OF LAND DESCRIBED IN A WARRANTY DEED RECORDED IN LIBER 0878 ON PAGE 038 OF VAN BUREN COUNTY RECORDS; THENCE NORTH 00 DEGREES 40' 29" WEST, ALONG THE LAST DESCRIBED LINE, 1237.233 FEET TO A LINE WHICH IS 218 FEET SOUTHERLY OF AND PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION; THENCE EAST ALONG THE LAST DESCRIBED LINE 40.40 FEET TO A LINE WHICH IS 716.50 FEET EAST OF AND PARALLEL WITH THE NORTH AND SOUTH QUARTER LINE OF SAID SECTION, ALSO BEING THE WEST LINE OF A PARCEL OF LAND DESCRIBED IN A QUIT CLAIM DEED RECORDED IN LIBER 1133 ON PAGE 991 OF VAN BUREN COUNTY RECORDS; THENCE NORTH 00 DEGREES 40' 29" WEST, ALONG THE FAST DESCRIBED LINE 218.00 FEET TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING. Street Address: 52757 48th Avenue, Lawrence, Michigan 49064 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA § 600.3241a in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of the sale. If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCLA § 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WE OBTAIN WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE.
Dated: January 29, 2026 For more information, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing: Robert A. Blumberg (P87490), Johnson, Blumberg, & Associates, LLC, 30 North LaSalle St., Suite 3650 Chicago, Illinois, 60602. Telephone: (312) 541-9710 File No.: MI 26 6935
(01-29)(02-19)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Matthew Craig; Atty: Team X; 1st Pub: 1/29/2026; Atty File #: 527625F01; Insurer: FNMA
Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 1:00 PM, on February 26, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Matthew Craig an unmarried man Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns Foreclosing Assignee (if any): NewRez LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing
Date of Mortgage: January 25,

Continues on page 8

=• PUBLIC NOTICE •=

Continues from page 7

2017
Date of Mortgage Recording: January 30, 2017
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $71,503.15
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Paw Paw, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: The Southwest 1/4 of Section 36, Town 3 South, Range 14 West, described as: beginning at the Southwest corner of said Section 36; thence North 00 degrees 28 minutes 57 seconds West, along the West line of said section, 990.0 feet; thence South 89 degrees 56 minutes 07 seconds East, 440.00 feet; thence South 00 degrees 28 minutes 57 seconds East, parallel with the West line of said section, 990.004 feet to the South line of said section; thence North 89 degrees 56 minutes 04 seconds West along said South line 440.00 feet to the place of beginning.
Common street address (if any): 35910 72nd Ave, Decatur, MI 49045-8700
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: January 29, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1582776

(01-29)(02-19)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Logan Phillips; Atty: PUBLIC NOTICE AGENCY - PUBLIC NOTICE AGENCY; 1st Pub: 1/15/2026; Atty File #: 25-017305; Insurer: (unknown)

Notice of Foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly at 01:00 PM on February 12, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE: Mortgagor(s): Logan Phillips, a single man Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as nominee for Success Mortgage Partners, Inc., a Michigan Corporation Date of mortgage: April 12, 2019, Recorded on April 19, 2019, Book # 1683, on Page # 91. Foreclosing Assignee: Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC. Amount claimed to be due at the date hereof: One Hundred Seventy Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty-Three 88/100 Dollars ($107,963.88) Mortgaged premises: Located in the Township of Decatur, County of Van Buren: LOT 6, BLOCK 2, DOUGLAS LEE ADDITION TO THE VILLAGE OF DECATUR, VAN BUREN COUNTY, MICHIGAN, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF, AS RECORDED IN LIBER 4 OF PLATS ON PAGE 19, VAN BUREN COUNTY RECORDS. Commonly known as 455 Douglas Dr Decatur MI 49045 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale, or 15 days from the MCL 600.3241a(b) notice, whichever is later; or unless extinguished pursuant to MCL 600.3238. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of Act 236 of 1961 pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice. Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC Assignee ALAW 5404 Cypress Center Drive, Suite 300, Tampa, FL 33609 (813) 221-4743 25-017305

(01-15)(02-05)

County: Van Buren; Mtgr: Helen Burton; Atty: Team H; 1st Pub: 1/15/2026; Atty File #: 527692F01; Insurer: (unknown)

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement

Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Van Buren County, starting promptly

Continues on page 9

VILLAGE OF MATTAWAN NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Village of Mattawan Council will hold a Public Hearing to consider a levy of up to six (6) mills, an increase of one (1) mill on the current millage rate, or other such amount as determined by the Village Council, to provide support for police operations and capital improvements within the district. This action would be in compliance with Public Act 33 of 1951. The current levy is five (5) mills. The Council shall consider any appropriate levy.

The Special Assessment District will include the same boundaries as the incorporated village and the tax levy will be on all "real" property, not "personal property".

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a Public Hearing on said request will be held on ***Monday, February 23, 2026 before the Village Council at 7:00 p.m.*** in the Village meeting room at which time all interested persons will be given an opportunity to be heard.

The meeting will be held at the address below. Please send all written comments to:

Village of Mattawan
24221 Front Avenue
Mattawan, MI 49071
(269) 668-2128
offices@mattawanmi.com

Jolie Storm-Artis
Village Clerk

WAVERLY TOWNSHIP NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION OF BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 4-1-26 THROUGH 03-31-27

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Budget Hearing and Adoption of the Budget for the fiscal year April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027 has been scheduled for **March 3, 2026 at 12:30 P.M.** at the Waverly Township Hall, 42114 M-43 Highway, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079

Starr Houston
Waverly Township Clerk

BLOOMINGDALE TOWNSHIP INVITATION TO BID

Bloomingdale Township is soliciting proposals for qualified providers to provide cemetery maintenance and Sexton services to Bloomingdale Township. The contractor must be capable and willing to provide services as outlined by the Board. Contractors can contact Bloomingdale Township, 109 E. Kalamazoo St., PO BOX 11, Bloomingdale, MI 49026 (269) 521-3800 ext 3 for further information or to obtain a bid packet.

Sealed Bids must be to Bloomingdale Township no later than 1:00pm
On March 18, 2026. The Township Board reserves the right to reject any and all sealed bids.

Melanie Kelly, Township Clerk

Advertisement for Bids
PAW PAW PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BID PROPOSAL

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Education of Paw Paw Public Schools will receive sealed bids for the installation of filtered bottle-filling stations and faucets in compliance with the Michigan Clean Drinking Water Access Act (2023 PA 154).

PROJECT SCOPE

The project consists of the removal, replacement, modification, and installation of drinking fountains and bottle filling stations across multiple District buildings. All hardware must meet NSF/ANSI standard 53 for lead reduction and standard 42 for particulate removal. All work must be completed by June 15, 2026.

SITE INSPECTION

A pre-bid meeting will be held at Paw Paw High School – 30609 Red Arrow Hwy, Paw Paw, MI 49079, 9:00 AM EST, Friday, February 13, 2026. All Bidders are encouraged to attend.

BID SUBMITTAL

Sealed bids will be received until 10:00 AM EST, Tuesday March 3, 2026, at the Paw Paw Public Schools Administration Building, 119 Johnson Rd., Paw Paw, MI 49079. Bids received after this time will neither be considered nor accepted. Bids must be submitted in duplicate (2 copies).

All proposals received by the time and date stated above will be opened and read aloud publicly at 10:00 AM EST, Tuesday March 3, 2026 at 119 Johnson Rd., Paw Paw. MI 49079. BIDS THAT ARE FAXED, EMAILED, OR UPLOADED DIGITALLY WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

In accordance with Section 1267 of the Revised School Code, each Bid must be accompanied by a sworn and notarized Familial Disclosure Statement completed by the Bidder disclosing any familial relationship between the owner or any employee of the Bidder and any member of the District's Board of Education or the Superintendent of the District. The Board of Education will not accept a Bid that does not include this sworn and notarized disclosure statement.

Bidder must also certify that it is not an Iran-linked business.

BID DOCUMENTS

Digital copies of the plans and specifications may be obtained from the District website: https://ppps.org/page/filter-first

PREVAILING WAGE REQUIREMENTS

This project is funded in whole or in part with federal assistance. Accordingly, all work must be performed in accordance with the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. 3141, et seq.) and applicable regulations. All laborers and mechanics employed on this project must be paid not less than the prevailing wages and fringe benefits as specified in the applicable wage determination issued by the U.S. Department of Labor. The current federal wage decision (General Wage Determination) for the locality is included in the Bid Documents. Successful Bidders will be required to submit certified payroll records weekly to ensure compliance.

BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS

Bidders submitting a Bid for this Project shall have qualifications as follows:

a. Shall be a reputable, recognized organization, with at least five (5) years' successful experience on work of this type and scope of this project.
b. Shall have a license where required by public authorities having jurisdiction.
c. Shall have ample financial resources for work of this magnitude.

BID SECURITY - PERFORMANCE BONDS

Bid Security: Each Bid shall be accompanied by good and sufficient Bid security or Bid bond in an amount not less than 5% of the Bid amount and shall secure the Owner from loss or damage by reason of the withdrawal of the Bid by a Bidder after the Bid deadline or by failure of the successful Bidder to enter into a contract with the Owner, if its Bid is accepted by the Owner.

Bid securities will be released or returned upon execution of a contract with the successful Bidder, or rejection of all Bids.

Bid security may be provided by furnishing a bond from a surety company having a rating of A- or better or certified check.

Performance and Payment Bonds: The successful Bidder will be required to secure Performance and Payment Bonds for all contracts exceeding $50,000, pursuant to MCL 129.201, et seq., from a surety company having a rating of A- or better-for the full amount of the Contract.

RESERVATIONS

The Board of Education reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive irregularities, and to award the contract in the best interest of the District, to the extent permitted by law.

For questions, please contact Dan Grimm at dan.grimm@ppps.org.

BUILD TOGETHER PAW PAW PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Arlington Township
NOTICE OF BOARD OF REVIEW HEARINGS

The Board of Review will be meeting in March to review the Assessment Roll and hear appeals. All meetings will be held at the Arlington Township Hall, 52022 34th Ave, Bangor, Michigan 49013. The organizational meeting will be held on March 2nd, 2026 at 3:30 pm. No appeals will be heard at the organizational meeting. The appeal hearings will begin on March 9th, 2026, at 3:00 pm. APPEALS ARE BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. Please contact the Arlington Township Assessor, Danielle Golembiewski by phone 269-225-9006 or by email at ***Assessor@ArlingtonTownship.com*** to make an appointment.
If the times available are not convenient, you may appeal by letter. Send letters and supporting documentation to Arlington Township, 52022 34th Ave, Bangor, MI 49013. All letter appeals must be received by 2:00 p.m. 3-11-2026.

Monday March 9th	**3:00pm to 9:00pm**
Wednesday March 11th	**9:00am to 3:00pm**

Assessments have been adjusted to result in anticipated multipliers of 1.0000 for all classes. With "Proposal A" in effect, the Taxable Values, excluding new construction and ownership transfers, are capped at the inflation rate of 2.7% for the 2026 tax year. Taxes are based on the Taxable Value. Also, note that if you should have a Principal Residence Exemption on your property and this is not noted on your notice, you should contact the Assessor.

2026 Starting Ratios are as follows:		Factors:	
Ag:	45.85	Ag:	1.0905
Com:	45.37	Com:	1.1020
Ind:	47.16	Ind:	1.0602
Res:	46.68	Res:	1.0711
Personal:	50.00	Personal:	1.0000

Arlington Township Assessor
Danielle Golembiewski

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PUBLIC NOTICE
WAVERLY TOWNSHIP
2026 MARCH BOARD OF REVIEW

The Waverly Township March Board of Review for 2026 will be held at the Waverly Township Hall, 42114 M-43 Hwy, on the following dates:

March 3rd, 2026 (8:00am – 9:00am) = **Organizational Meeting – No Appeals**
March 9th, 2026 (10:00am – 1:00pm & 2:00pm - 5:00pm) = **Appeal Hearing***
March 10th, 2026 (2:00pm – 5:00pm & 6:00pm – 9:00 pm) = **Appeal Hearing***
*By Board resolution, residents are able to protest by letter, provided protest letter is received prior to March 10TH, 2026.
The tentative ratios and the estimated multipliers for each class of real property and personal property for 2026 are as follows:

Class	Ratio	Factor
*Agricultural	49.49%	1.01031
*Residential	47.68%	1.04866
*Personal Property	50.00%	1.00000
*Industrial	50.00%	1.00000
*Commercial	41.90%	1.19332

American With Disabilities (ADA) Notice
The Township will provide necessary reasonable services to individuals with disabilities at the Board of Review meetings upon (5) days notice.
Contact: (Starr Houston – 269-657-6847)

Anne Richmond
Assessor

Starr Houston
Clerk

• CLASSIFIEDS •

• WANTED •

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STANDING TIMBER. Top Michigan lumber manufacturer seeking landowners with 25 or more mature hardwood trees to sell. Qualityhardwoodsinc.com • 517-566-8061.

• SERVICES •

TIM'S STUMP GRINDING SERVICE- I believe in respectable service. 269-299-5052, 269-624-6884.

HAULING, CLEANING RECYCLING. Moving service. Right Quick Hauling. Dan Wydick, Dustin Wydick, Daniel Wydick, 423-8545. Serving since 1994.

FIELD PLUMBING & HEATING, INC. Services all brands of heating & cooling equipment in your home or business. 24/7 service for over 50 years, 269-674-3839.

BUYING JUNK CARS, trucks, scrap metal and farm machinery. Kalamazoo Metal Recyclers, 1525 King Highway, Kalamazoo. 269-381-1315.

PRO HANDYMAN SERVICE SOUTH HAVEN AREA Call 269-903-6397.

PERRY'S PERFECT PITCH PIANO TUNING Homes-Churches-Schools, Call 269-999-4440

• FOR SALE •

HAY FOR SALE 5 x 4 round bales, first cut, available 40 bales. Storage and inside, $50 apiece, 773-816-7120, 847-553-5418. Lawrence area.

• AUCTIONS •

ALL SECURE SELF STORAGE will hold sale of abandoned property at a public sale pursuant in 540.521-570.527: Public Auction: 2/24/2026 at or after 9:30a.m. EST: 37404 W Red Arrow Highway Paw Paw: Rob Castner 2; Cyndi Martin, 58; Freida Wiessew, 201.

MEDICARE GURU
Call
Janet Bontrager
Insurance Advisor
(269) 998-6977

PUBLIC NOTICE

Continues from page 8

at 1:00 PM, on February 19, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Helen L. Burton and Eddie J. Burton, wife and husband
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC
Date of Mortgage: May 4, 2022
Date of Mortgage Recording: May 9, 2022
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $191,261.14
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Arlington, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as: Beginning on the West 1/4 post of Section 18, Town 2 South, Range 15 West, Arlington Township, Van Buren County, Michigan; thence South on the West line of said Section, 589.60 feet; thence East at right angles, 515.00 feet; thence North 589.60 feet; thence West 515.00 feet to the place beginning.
Except Beginning at the West 1/4 post of Section 18, Town 2 South, Range 15 West, Arlington Township, Van Buren County, Michigan; thence South 00 degrees 07 minutes 46 seconds West on the West section line, 208.00 feet; thence South 89 degrees 26 minutes 59 seconds East, parallel with the East and West 1/4 line, 515.00 feet; thence North 00 degrees 07 minutes 46 seconds East 208.00 feet to the East and West 1/4 line; thence North 89 degrees 26 minutes 59 seconds West on same, 515.00 feet to the place of beginning.
Common street address (if any): 34315 County Road 681, Bangor, MI 49013-9776
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: January 15, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1581941

(01-15)(02-05)

TOWNSHIP OF ALMENA
2026 NOTICE OF BOARD OF REVIEW

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Board of Review will meet at the Township Hall, 27625 CR 375, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079, to examine and review the 2026 Assessment Roll. The board will convene on the following dates for the hearing of appeals of assessments or taxable values, poverty exemptions, parcel classification appeals and/or current year qualified agricultural denials:

Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 7:00 am Organizational Meeting
Monday, March 9, 2026, 9:00 am to Noon and 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm
Thursday, March 12, 2026, Noon to 3:00 pm and 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm

and on such additional days as required to hear all persons who have given notice of the desire to be heard until assessment rolls have been revised, corrected and approved.

APPOINTMENTS ARE REQUIRED. Contact the Assessor at 269-655-1144 or by email at ***BEN.APGLLC@GMAIL.COM*** for further information. Letter appeals will be accepted and must be received no later than 5:00 pm March 12, 2026. Address listed below.

Tentative ratios and estimated multipliers for 2026 are as follows:

Agricultural	50.58%	0.9885
Commercial	45.12%	1.1082
Industrial	52.48%	0.9527
Residential	46.84%	1.0675
Personal Property	50.00%	1.0000

Tentative equalization factor of 1.0000 for all classes is expected after completion of Board of Review.

Joe Leduc, Supervisor Almena Township
Ben Brousseau, Assessor Almena Township

Almena Township Board Meetings are open to all without regard to race, national origin, sex or disability.

American with Disabilities (ADA) Notice
The township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing upon seven (7) days' notice to Almena Township. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Almena Township by writing or calling.

Sandra Rickli
Almena Township Clerk
27625 County Road 375
Paw Paw, MI 49079
269.668.6910

BLOOMINGDALE TOWNSHIP
2026 NOTICE BOARD OF REVIEW

THE BLOOMINGDALE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF REVIEW FOR 2026 WILL BE HELD AT THE BLOOMINGDALE TOWNSHIP HALL, 109 E. KALAMAZOO ST., BLOOMINGDALE, MI 49026 ON THE FOLLOWING DATES:

MARCH, 3 2026 (3:30 pm)
ORGANIZATION MEETING
NO APPEALS NO APPEALS
MARCH 11, 2026 (9 am to 3 pm)
APPEAL HEARING
MARCH 13, 2026 (3pm to 9 pm)
APPEAL HEARING **

**ALL APPEALS WILL BE HEARD BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. PLEASE CALL 269-521-3800 EXT 4 TO SCHEDULE AN Appointment. BY BOARD RESOLUTION, RESIDENTS ARE ABLE TO PROTEST BY LETTER, PROVIDED PROTEST LETTER IS RECEIVED PRIOR TO MARCH 11th 2026 BY 5:00 PM.

TENTATIVE RATIOS AND ESTIMATED MULTIPLIERS FOR 2026 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

CLASS	RATIO	FACTOR
*Agricultural	43.11%	1.15982
*Residential	44.18%	1.13173
*Personal	50.00%	1.0000
*Commercial	45.68%	1.09457
*Industrial	49.03%	1.01978

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA) NOTICE:

The township will provide necessary reasonable services to individuals with disabilities at the Board of Review meetings upon (5) days' notice. Contact: Michael Richmond at 269-521-3800 ext. 4.

MICHAEL RICHMOND - ASSESSOR

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TOWNSHIP OF PINE GROVE
2026 NOTICE OF BOARD OF REVIEW

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Board of Review will meet at the Township Hall, 26520 C.R. 388, Gobles, MI 49055 to examine and review the 2026 assessment roll. The board will convene on the following dates for the hearing of appeals of assessments or taxable values, poverty exemptions, parcel classification appeals and/or current year qualified agricultural denials:

Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 4:30 pm Organizational Meeting
Monday, March 9, 2026, 9:00 am to Noon and 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm
Wednesday, March 11, 2026, Noon to 3:00 pm and 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm

And on such additional days as required to hear all persons who have given notice of the desire to be heard until assessment rolls have been revised, corrected, and approved.

APPOINTMENTS ARE REQUIRED. Contact the Assessor at 269-655-1144 or by email at ***BEN.APGLLC@GMAIL.COM*** for further information. Letter appeals will be accepted and must be received no later than 5:00 pm March 11, 2026. Address listed below.

Tentative ratios and estimated multipliers for 2026 are as follows:

Agricultural	46.50%	1.0753
Commercial	47.03%	1.0632
Industrial	48.71%	1.0265
Residential	45.97%	1.0877
Personal Property	50.00%	1.0000

Tentative equalization factor of 1.000 for all classes is expected after completion of Board of Review.

Pam Visser, Supervisor Pine Grove Township
Ben Brousseau, Assessor Pine Grove Township

Pine Grove Township Board Meetings are open to all without regard to race, national origin, sex or disability.

American with Disabilities (ADA) Notice
The township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing upon seven (7) days' notice to Pine Grove Township. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact Pine Grove Township by writing or calling.

Michelle Meert
Pine Grove Township Clerk
26520 C.R. 388
Gobles, MI 49055

ALMENA TOWNSHIP
VAN BUREN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF AN ORDINANCE ADDRESSING FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PROVISIONS OF THE STATE CONSTRUCTION CODE

Ordinance No. 2026-01

Please take notice that on January 21, 2026, the Township Board of Almena Township adopted Ordinance No. 2026-01, an Ordinance to designate an enforcing agency to discharge the responsibility of Almena Township located to designate regulated flood hazard areas under the provisions of the State Construction Code Act, Act No. 230 of the Public Acts of 1972, as amended. A summary of the sections of this Ordinance follows:

- Section 1: Agency Designated. The Building, Electrical, Mechanical, and Planning Code Officials of the Township are designated as the enforcing agency for Almena Township on this matter.
- Section 2: Code Appendix Enforced. Pursuant to the provisions of the state construction code, in accordance with Section 8b(6) of Act 230, of the Public Acts of 1972, as amended, Appendix G of the Michigan Building Code shall be enforced by the enforcing agency within the jurisdiction of the community adopting this ordinance.
- Section 3: Designation of Regulated Flood Prone Hazard Areas. Applicable FEMA Flood Insurance Study and Flood Insurance Rate Map(s) are adopted by reference.
- Section 4: Most Restrictive Standards. If another ordinance contains standards inconsistent with the provisions of this ordinance, the most restrictive standards shall apply.
- Section 5: Publication. The Ordinance will become effective on June 10, 2026.

Copies of the complete text of the Ordinance may be obtained from Sandi Rickli at the Clerk's office at 27625 County Road 375, Paw Paw, MI 49079, or by emailing ***almenaclerk@comcast.net.***

Published by Order of the Township Board
Almena Township, Van Buren County

Sandi Rickli, Clerk
27625 County Road 375,
Paw Paw, MI 49079
(269) 668-6910

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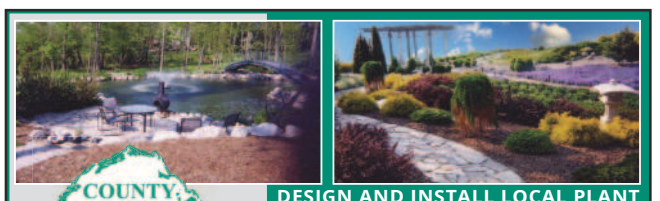
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City Council approves Social Contract

By James Windell

In a special meeting on Monday, February 2, 2026, the South Haven City Council approved a Social Contract governing their behavior as council members.

City councils and similar public bodies have started adopting what they call a Social Contract these days because it fills a gap that neither laws nor *Roberts' Rules of Order* fully address. A social contract, then, is a way of making the implicit expectations of civic life explicit. Many would agree that we live in an era when trust, civility, and shared norms cannot really be taken for granted.

Although parliamentary procedure governs *how* decisions are made and local ordinances govern *what* the City Council can do, neither spells out in a clear way how members should treat each other and the level of civility that is expected.

Previously, the South Haven City Council discussed a much longer and more detailed social contract, they ultimately decided on one that was more concise:

Whereas, we desire to model behavior that builds, rather than erodes, community. Whereas, we desire to foster an environment of respect and cooperation. Whereas, we recognize that decorum is necessary to effectively and efficiently conduct the business of the City. Now, therefore, we hereby commit to the following:

1. Fiduciary Duty. We will put the interests of the City above our own.
2. Act with Integrity. We will act with honesty, trust, altruism, and humility.
3. Authentic Communication. We will seek to understand and communicate through meaningful conversation. We will assume positive intent.
4. Respect. We will treat each other, City staff, and members of the public with respect.
5. Accountability. We will hold each other accountable.

There were no members of the public who commented on the proposed social contract and there was no debate among council members. There was unanimous approval of this social contract.

Council adopts Rules of Procedure

By James Windell

In an effort to run more efficient City Council meetings, the South Haven City Council met in a special session on Monday, February 2, 2026, to attempt to come up with some rules that would help them toward that end.

Mayor Annie Brown said during the special meeting and before a vote occurred on the rule changes that "Some of these changes are because our meetings are too long and the public thinks our meetings are too long."

In an effort to not only run more efficient meetings, but to also develop a form of debate that builds, rather than erodes, community and at the same time to foster an environment of cooperation in which its members will place the needs of the City above their own, a set of procedures that help council members act with integrity and humility, be authentic communicators, and make informed decisions, rules of procedure were proposed by City Attorney Dave Eberle.

After discussion and minimal debate, including stated concerns Councilwoman Mary Hosley, the Council voted to adopt the following Rules of Procedure:

1. Authority
   1.1 These Rules of Procedure are adopted by the City Council of the City of South Haven pursuant to the City Charter, Public Act 279 of 1909, as amended (The Home Rule City Act), and the Public Act 267 of 1976, as amended (The Open Meetings Act).
2. City Council -- General
   2.1 *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (12th Edition) shall govern the parliamentary procedure and practice of the Council in all matters to which such rules are applicable, provided they are not in conflict with these Rules of Procedure, the City Charter, City ordinances, or the laws of the State of Michigan.
   2.2 *Order of Business*: A written agenda for all meetings shall be prepared by the City Manager. Unless modified by the City Manager or the body, the order of business shall be as follows: Call to Order; Pledge of Allegiance; Invocation; Roll Call / Excusing of absent members; Conflicts of Interest; Approval of Agenda; Approval of Minutes; Community Update; Public Comment; Consent Agenda; Special Business; Unfinished Business; New Business; City Manager's Report; Member Comments; Adjournment.
   2.3 *Agenda*: Prior to the initial publication of an agenda, items may be placed on the agenda by the City Manager, the Mayor, or upon the written request of any two members. The City Manager may modify the agenda until it is approved by the body. Once the agenda is approved, any change shall require the approval of the body.
   2.4 *Consent Agenda*: Items shall be removed from the consent agenda at the request of any member or the City Manager. Items removed from the consent agenda shall be moved to special business. When a removed item is called under special business, the individual who removed the item shall, following the introduction of the item by the City Manager, concisely state the reason for removal.
   2.5 *Introduction of agenda items*: The Chair shall announce agenda items in the order stated in the agenda. The City Manager shall be afforded the opportunity to introduce each item before any motion is made. If an agenda item comes from another board or committee upon which a member sits, the member shall be afforded two minutes to further introduce the agenda item. The purpose of such member introduction is to provide background and relevant information. Members shall not share their position or personal thoughts during such introduction.
   2.6 *Call for Motion*: Following the introduction of each agenda item as provided in rule 2.5, the Chair shall call for a motion. There shall be no debate unless there is a pending motion. Without assigning the floor, the Chair may permit brief discussion or consultation outside of debate prior to a motion being made. No member shall engage in discussion or consultation without the consent of the Chair.
   2.7 *Debate*
   A. Once a motion is made and seconded, the Chair shall state the question and inquire as to whether there is any debate. Any time spent answering a member's questions shall count towards the member's time. Rights in regard to debate are not transferable.
   B. The member who made the motion shall be afforded priority in debate followed by the member who seconded the motion.
   C. For main motions, a member may not speak longer than ten minutes on the same question unless the member obtains the consent of the body.
   D. For debatable motions other than main motions, a member may not speak longer than five minutes on the same question unless the member obtains the consent of the body.
   E. A member may not speak more than twice on the same question unless the member obtains the consent of the body.
   F. Consent of the body under this rule may be given by unanimous consent or by means of a motion to extend debate.
   G. The City Manager shall be afforded an opportunity to participate in debate.
   H. Following the close of debate, the Chair shall restate the question and call for the vote.
   2.8 *Voting*. Except as otherwise required by statute, charter, or ordinance, an affirmative vote of the majority of those members present shall be required for the approval of any requested action or motion placed before the body. Voting shall be ordinarily by voice vote; provided, however, that a roll call shall be required for all ordinances, resolutions, and if requested by any member or directed by the Chair. Except for matters in which a member has a conflict of interest, a present member shall vote on all matters before the body. Each member shall cast a vote in favor of ("yes") or opposed to ("no") the question when called. Members are not permitted to "pass" during a roll call vote.
   2.9 *Unanimous Consent*. In cases where there seems to be no opposition in routine business or on questions of little importance, the Chair may seek to dispose of the business or question by unanimous consent.
   2.10 *Public Comment*. The following rules apply to all periods of public comment, including public hearings.
   A. All persons wishing to comment shall be given an opportunity. Public comment during a public hearing comment period shall be limited to the subject of the public hearing.
   B. No person shall speak without first being recognized by the Chair.
   C. Persons wishing to speak shall speak from the podium, if able, and direct their comments to the Chair. Persons shall be asked to provide their name and address for the record, but no person shall be required to provide their name and address as a condition of speaking.
   D. Each person shall limit their comments to three minutes per comment period and shall be allowed to speak only once per comment period. Yeilding unexpired time to another person or sharing time is not permitted. The time limit for a public comment period may be modified by a 2/3 vote of the members present during the approval of the agenda.
   E. At the beginning of a public hearing public comment period, the Chair shall acknowledge all written correspondence received pertaining to the public hearing. Correspondence need not be read aloud when acknowledged but may be read aloud at the discretion of the Chair or the determination of the body.
   2.11 *Member Comment*. A member's comment shall be limited to one period of three minutes unless the member obtains the consent of the body by unanimous consent or by means of a motion to extend debate. Motions may be made during member comment; however, such motions shall be limited to directing the City Manager to take certain actions or placing an item on a future agenda.
   2.12 *Cancellation of Meetings*. The Chair, in consultation with the City Manager, may cancel any meeting of the Council due to inclement weather, natural disaster, emergency, or where it would otherwise be unsafe or infeasible to hold the meeting. Notice of any such cancellation must be provided to the members as soon as is practical.
3. Committee of the Whole – General
   3.1 *Membership*. There is hereby established a Committee of the Whole ("COW"). The membership of the COW shall be comprised of the members of the Council. The Mayor Pro Tem shall serve as the Chair of the COW.
   3.2 *Purpose*. The purpose of the COW is to review items requiring more in-depth debate prior to such items being addressed by the Council. The results of votes taken are not final decisions of the Council, but have the status of recommendations which the Council is given the opportunity to consider further and which it votes on finally under its regular rules. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the COW may decline to move any item forward to the Council for its consideration.
   3.3 *Rules of Order*. *Roberts' Rules of Order Newly Revised* (12 Ed.) shall govern the parliamentary procedure and practice of the COW in all matters to which such rules are applicable, provided they are not in conflict with these Rules of Procedure, the City Charter, City ordinances, or the laws of the State of Michigan.
   3.4 *Order of Business*. A written agenda for all meetings shall be prepared by the City Manager. Unless modified by the City Manager or the body, the order of business shall be as follows: Call to Order Roll Call / Excusing of absent members; Conflicts of Interest; Approval of Agenda; Approval of Minutes; Public Comment; Unfinished Business; New Business; City Manager's Report; Member Comments; Adjournment
   3.5 *Agenda and Minutes*. Prior to the initial publication of an agenda, items may be placed on the agenda by the City Manager, the Mayor, the Chair, or upon the written request of any two members. The City Manager may modify the agenda until it is approved by the body. Once the agenda is approved, any change shall require the approval of the body. Approved minutes shall be filed with the Council.
   3.6 *Introduction of agenda items*. The Chair shall announce agenda items in the order stated in the agenda. The City Manager shall be afforded the opportunity to introduce each item before any motion is made. If an agenda item comes from another board or committee upon which a member sits, the member shall be afforded two minutes to further introduce the agenda item. The purpose of such member introduction is to provide background and relevant information. Members shall not share their position or personal thoughts during such introduction.
   3.7 *Motions and Debate*. Debate may occur prior to any motion being made. Debate is intended to be effective but more informal than traditional debate. In addition to enforcing the rules and maintaining order and decorum, the Chair may take action to facilitate effective debate, ensure that all members have an opportunity to participate in debate, and ensure that no one member dominates the debate. The City Manager shall be afforded an opportunity to participate in debate.
   3.8 *Voting*. An affirmative vote of the majority of those members present shall be required for the approval of any requested action or motion placed before the body. Voting shall be ordinarily by voice vote; provided, however, that a roll call shall be required if requested by any member or directed by the Chair. Except for matters in which a member has a conflict of interest, a present member shall vote on all matters before the body. Each member shall cast a vote in favor of ("yes") or opposed to ("no") the question when called. Members are not permitted to "pass" during a roll call vote.
   3.9 *Unanimous Consent*. In cases where there seems to be no opposition in routine business or on questions of little importance, the Chair may seek to dispose of the business or question by unanimous consent.
   3.10 *Public Comment*. The following rules apply to all periods of public comment:
   A. All persons wishing to comment shall be given an opportunity.
   B. No person shall speak without first being recognized by the Chair.
   C. Persons wishing to speak shall speak from the podium, if able, and direct their comments to the Chair. Persons shall be asked to provide their name and address for the record, but no person shall be required to provide their name and address as a condition of speaking.
   D. Each person shall limit their comments to three minutes per comment period and shall be allowed to speak only once per comment period. Yeilding unexpired time to another person or sharing time is not permitted. The time limit for public comment may be modified by a 2/3 vote of the members present during the approval of the agenda.
   3.11 *Member Comment*. A member's comment shall be limited to one period of three minutes unless the member obtains the consent of the body by unanimous consent or by means of a motion to extend debate. Motions may be made during member comment; however, such motions shall be limited to directing the City Manager to take certain actions or placing an item on a future agenda.
   3.12 *Meetings*. When there is business to be transacted, the COW shall meet prior to the first monthly regular meeting of the Council and at such other times as the COW or the City Manager shall designate. The Chair, in consultation with the City Manager, may cancel any meeting of the COW due to inclement weather, natural disaster, emergency, or where it would otherwise be unsafe or infeasible to hold the meeting. Notice of any such cancellation must be provided to the members as soon as is practical.
4. Amendment
   4.1 These Rules of Procedure may be amended by the Council by either (a) previous notice and a two-thirds vote of the members present or (b) a vote of a majority of the entire membership.
   These rules of procedure shall be effective immediately and shall supersede any prior rules. All prior rules are hereby rescinded.

Council members Arnold, Capps, Flack, Polk and Mayor Brown voted in favor of these rules. Council woman Mary Hosley voted against them. The rules were adopted.

After the meeting Hosley said that she wanted to clarify her objections to the Rules of Procedure – especially since the meeting was not televised. One of her main concerns was the operation of the Committee as a Whole (COW).

"To me a workshop is where we do not vote, it's purely for discussion," Hosley explained. "And there will be votes by COW. That increases the number of meetings that residents would need to attend if they want to say something related to issues before the City Council."

She also expressed concern that recommendations that come out of COW will simply be approved by the City Council. "There will be a predisposition to follow those recommendation and I don't find that engaging. We need to engage all of our stakeholders."

Since the COW will meet at 5:30 pm, Hosley states that this will makes it difficult some people to attend the meetings that will not be televised.

She also objected to the new rules that limit time for discission and debate. "I did object to decreasing the City Council members time for talking from 10 minutes to five minutes because our time includes our questions and answers with staff," she said. "So I am very concerned that discussion will not be as robust as it used to be, particularly in contentious matters."

She stated that she was also concerned about limiting the time for residents to talk during City Council meetings. "I'm concerned that that this sends a message that we do not want to hear from our residents," Hosley said. "I know we are trying to balance between giving every one an opportunity to talk and decreasing the time of the meetings."

Hosley concluded by saying that she was at the special meeting "To protect the resident's rights to speak."

Other council members who voted in favor of the new rules of procedure expressed enthusiasm for the rules and saw them as a way to hold meetings that are more efficient and less time-consuming.

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